


ABRAHAM LINCOLN

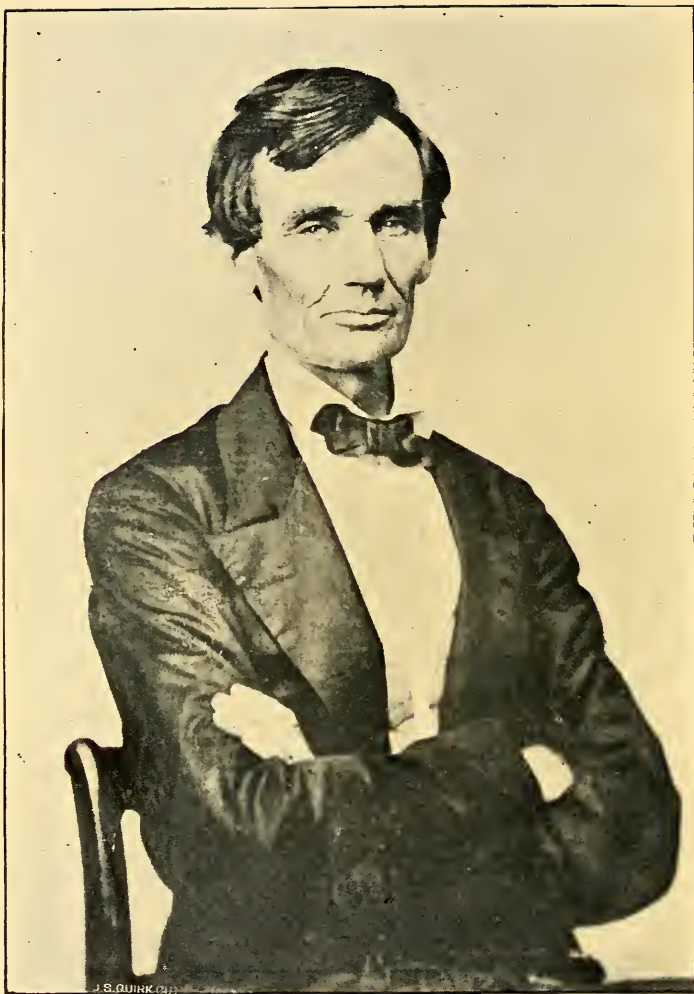
Address by WILLIAM H. LAMBERT

THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA
F E B R U A R Y 1 2, 1 9 0 9



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from

The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant



*Copied from original ambrotype, owned by William H. Lambert, made at
Springfield, Illinois, August 13, 1860.*

1809—1909

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE
THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA

BY

WILLIAM H. LAMBERT

February 12, 1909

“Lincoln the Honest Man, Abolished Slavery,
Reestablished the Union, Saved the Republic,
Without Veiling the Statue of Liberty.”

From inscription on Gold Medal
presented by Forty Thousand
Frenchmen to the widow of
Abraham Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



AMONG the many associations that are met to commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln there is none that can rejoice in the honor done his name with greater fitness than The Union League of Philadelphia.

The Union League owes its being to the earnest purpose to uphold his hands; of it he was an Honorary Member and in acknowledging his election as such he wrote "the generous approval of a portion of my fellow citizens so intelligent and patriotic as those comprising your association assures me that I have not wholly failed."

Among the founders of the League were men who had early advocated his nomination for the Presidency, strenuously worked for his election and heartily approved his administration, and when they united to form this organization they enrolled men of like sympathy and purpose, and The Union League became the prototype of many clubs emulous of its example. The League did not confine itself to mere verbal expressions of approbation, valuable and important as such evidences of sympathy and loyalty were, but it engaged actively and successfully in recruiting for the army, and, participating vigorously in the campaign for his renomination and re-election, was

powerfully effective in securing the triumph at the ballot which ensured final victory in the field. Having steadfastly and energetically supported the great President, The Union League of right joins the chorus of thanksgiving and praise for the life, the character and the work of Abraham Lincoln.

United with the thousands who to-day commemorate the centenary of his birth, recalling all that we have heard and read concerning him, especially the many incidents of his life that for months preparatory to this day have been narrated in our newspapers and magazines, remembering how he shaped our history and enriched our literature, it is hard to realize how little known he was to the country at large prior to the assembling of the convention that nominated him for the Presidency.

He had served a single term in the National House of Representatives, he had been an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate in 1855, in the next year his name had been presented to the first National Convention of the Republican party as a candidate for the Vice-Presidency; again placed in nomination by his party for the Senate, he engaged with Stephen A. Douglas in a political debate the most memorable in our history outside the halls of Congress, and as a result of this debate he secured a majority of the popular vote of the State for the Republican candidates for the Legislature, but as the majority of the legislators chosen was for Douglas, Lincoln was a second time defeated in his aspiration for the Senate. The fame of the debate led a club of young men in the city of New York to invite Mr. Lincoln to lecture, and in compliance he made a remarkable address at the Cooper Institute, in the presence of a large audi-

ence comprising some of the foremost members of the Republican party; because of this address he was requested to deliver a series of speeches in the New England States. These speeches in New York and the East attracted the attention of men influential in the councils of the party, who, opposed to the more prominent candidates for the Presidential nomination, were seeking a candidate who in their judgment would be more likely to be elected.

Consideration of Lincoln's availability, the importunity of the Republican candidates for Governor in Pennsylvania and Indiana, both "October States" and supposedly doubtful, local antagonism to Seward and to Chase, and the intense earnestness of Lincoln's friends in Illinois and adjacent States co-operated to secure for him the nomination.

Seemingly Lincoln had made so little impression upon the people at large, that conservatives who deprecated the radical phrase of the "Irrepressible Conflict" and feared its effect upon voters had apparently forgotten, if indeed they had known, that months before Seward had pronounced these objectionable words, Lincoln had declared "A house divided against itself cannot stand; I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free."

Despite efforts that have been made to controvert the statement, the truth is that for the moment the supreme fact of the Chicago Convention of 1860 "was the defeat of Seward rather than the nomination of Lincoln. It was the triumph of a presumption of availability over pre-eminence in intellect and unrivalled fame."

Elected to the Presidency by a minority of the popular

vote, his election followed by the threatened withdrawal of several States, the successful candidate might well be awed by the stupendous responsibility that awaited him. The months of suspense between his election and his inauguration were fraught with intense anxiety. In the hope of averting the threatened calamity many public meetings urged compromise and favored liberal concessions. Reaction appeared to be setting in and many who had helped to elect him seemed to regret their success; but whoever else was shaken, Lincoln was not, and to his intimate friends gave assurance of his firm adherence to the principles that had triumphed in his election.

In letters to Senator Trumbull Lincoln wrote, "Let there be no compromise on the question of extending slavery — if there be all our labor is lost, and ere long must be done again. * * * Stand firm. The tug has to come and better now than any time hereafter."

"If any of our friends do prove false, and fix up a compromise on the territorial question, I am for fighting again, that is all." "If it prove true (report that the forts in South Carolina will be surrendered by the consent of President Buchanan), I will, if our friends at Washington concur, announce publicly at once that they are to be retaken after the inauguration. This will give the Union men a rallying cry and preparations will proceed somewhat on this side as well as on the other." *

Meanwhile he steadily refrained from public utterance until he set forth from the home to which he was never to return alive. His touching farewell to his Springfield neighbors and the series of addresses in reply to greetings from the several communities through which he

* These passages were read from the original autograph letters.

passed on his journey to the National Capital plainly showed that he appreciated the weight of the burden he was about to assume and so far encouraged the party that had elected him, but gave little evidence of special fitness for the work. In the light of after events, the assertion which he made in Independence Hall, that rather than surrender the principles which had been declared there he would be assassinated on the spot, is pre-eminent as an indication of the source and the courage of his political convictions, while the fact that at the time of its utterance, he had been warned of a conspiracy to kill him, removes from these words any suspicion that they were spoken for rhetorical effect, and invests them with the solemnity of prophecy. The inaugural address of the new President was awaited with painful solicitude. Apprehension that, in the hope of averting disaster, he might yield somewhat of the principles upon which he had been elected; fear that, in retaliation for threats of disunion, he might determine upon desperate assault on the rights of the revolted and threatening States; mistrust that he might prove unequal to the Nation's supreme exigency, combined to intensify anxiety.

The address failed to satisfy extremists either North or South, but the great body of loyal people were delighted with the manifest determination of the President to preserve, protect and defend the government he had sworn to uphold. But his solemn assurances that he would in no wise endanger the property, peace and security of any section of the country; that it was his purpose to administer the government as it had come to him, and to transmit it unimpaired by any act of his to his successor; and his appeal to the memories of the past, and to

the common interests of the present, were alike powerless to recall the revolted States to their allegiance or to restrain the action of other States, bent on following their example.

Anticipating the inauguration of President Lincoln, the Southern Confederacy had been proclaimed, and its troops were arrayed against the authority of the United States, while the absence of efforts of repression seemed to indicate that the dissolution of the Union, so arrogantly declared by the States in rebellion, was to be accomplished.

For weeks succeeding his inauguration, the President awaited the progress of events,—the policy of *laissez-faire* seemed to have been adopted. Some tentative efforts were made to relieve the beleaguered forts within the limits of the insurgent territory, but apparently the Nation was drifting to death.

But the shot on Sumter wrought instant and wondrous change. However uncertain Abraham Lincoln may have been as to the method of maintaining the Union, his purpose to maintain it had been positively declared; and from the moment the flag was fired upon the method was no longer in doubt. The call of April 15, 1861, was the answer to the challenge of Charleston Harbor. We know now that the number of men called forth was utterly inadequate to the work to be done, but the value of the call was less in the number of men it evoked than in the assertion that armed rebellion was to be confronted, and the power of the Nation was to be put forth for its own preservation, and the enforcement of the laws.

Previous to his entrance upon the Presidency, Mr. Lincoln had had no part in the administration of great affairs; he was destitute of experience in statecraft and he

had no precedent either in our own history or in that of other lands to guide him. He had called to his Cabinet the chief of the leaders of the Republican party, men whose great experience in public affairs and whose admitted ability and acquirements justified their selection and might well indeed have induced him to submit to their direction, but he realized that as President he could not, even if he would, transfer the obligation of his office. Whatever doubts may have existed in the minds of his advisers as to his purpose and fitness to accept the responsibilities of his office were soon dispelled and it is evident that the President dominated his administration from the beginning when in reply to the Secretary of State, who had advised a radical and startling change in the governmental policy and had expressed his willingness to undertake its direction, Lincoln declared, "If this must be done, I must do it;" to the close when he notified the Lieutenant General "you are not to decide, discuss or confer upon any political questions. Such questions the President holds in his own hands, and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions."

In this connection and as confirmatory of the President's control of affairs, the recently published letter of his private secretary, John Hay, is particularly interesting as showing the impression made upon a qualified observer, and recorded at the time. Writing at Washington under date August 7, 1863, to his fellow secretary, Nicolay, Hay said: "The Tycoon is in fine whack. I have rarely seen him more serene and busy. He is managing this war, the draft, foreign relations and planning a reconstruction of the Union all at once. I never knew with what tyrannous authority he rules the Cabinet until

now. The most important things he decided and there is no cavil."

The outbreak of hostilities presented to President Lincoln an opportunity not of his seeking, but of which he might well avail himself. However specious the plea of State rights, however disguised the chief motive which prompted the secession of the revolting States, he knew, as the people knew, that slavery was the real cause of the Rebellion. He had long foreseen that the country could not permanently endure partially slave, partially free; he knew that slavery had been the basis of the controversies and dangers of the past. If tradition may be believed, in his early manhood he had declared that if ever he should have a chance, he would hit slavery hard, and now the chance had come. In 1837, with one other member of the Illinois Legislature, he had placed himself on record declaring his belief "that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy" and protesting against the passage of resolutions favoring it. Slavery was attempting the destruction of the Republic, and, by its own appeal to arms, was offering an opportunity for a counter-blow, which might forever destroy an institution whose malign influence had long controlled national affairs, and endangered the perpetuity of the Nation. He was President and Commander-in-chief; in the party that had elected him were many thousands anxious for the proclamation of freedom to the slave and insistent upon its issue. He had been the nominee of a party, but he was now the President of the United States, and neither hope of partisan gain nor personal gratification could swerve him from what he conceived to be the obligation of his oath. His conception of his duty was forcibly ex-

pressed in his letter to Horace Greeley, probably the most important of the many notable letters written by the President. Replying to the Editor's article accusing him of failure to meet the rightful expectations of 20,000,000 of the loyal people, Mr. Lincoln wrote from Washington under date of August 22, 1862 :

" I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed to myself through the 'New York Tribune.' If there be in it any statements, or assumptions of fact, which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not, now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend, whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

" As to the policy I ' seem to be pursuing,' as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt. I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be ' the Union as it was.' If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I

do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

“I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.”

Twenty months later in a letter to a citizen of Kentucky, in answer to his request for a statement of what had been said to the Governor of that State, the President wrote: “I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understood, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. * * * And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery.”

With clear view, and steadfast purpose, President Lin-

coln devoted his life to the preservation of the Union. To accomplish this end, in the spirit of the great Apostle to the Gentiles he made himself servant unto all that he might gain the more. Subordinating self, personal prejudices and partisan feelings were not allowed to obtrude between him and his conception of the country's need. Ability to serve the cause was the essential qualification for high office and honor, and outweighing other considerations, atoned for past or present personal objection.

Early in 1862 he appointed as chief of the War Department a man of boundless zeal and energy, who had treated Mr. Lincoln with marked discourtesy, had denounced his conduct of the war, and had freely expressed dislike for him and doubt of his fitness, an appointment as sagacious and fortunate as it was magnanimous; and he retained in his Cabinet the Secretary of the Treasury, whose own aspirations for the Presidential nomination were well known to Mr. Lincoln, who wrote: "Whether you shall remain at the head of the Treasury Department is a question which I will not allow myself to consider from any standpoint other than my judgment of the public service, and, in that view, I do not perceive occasion for a change."

The War of 1861-5 was no mere factional contest. It was a people's war, begun by a people jealous of its institutions, fearful of the wane of the power it had long wielded, distrustful of the new administration's assurances of non-intervention with the rights of States, and conscious that the limitation of slavery to the territory that it now occupied must eventually effect its extinction. The war was accepted by a people innocent of purpose to interfere with the "domestic institution" within State

lines, and far from united in opinion about slavery, and though substantially opposed to its extension over the country's free domain, not agreed as to the best method of legislative treatment; but one absolutely in love for the Union and determination to maintain it. "One would make war rather than let the Nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came."

Only the enlistment of the people on each of the contending sides could have sustained so long a war of such magnitude, and offered such heroic devotion as distinguished it. The President realized that his ability to make effective his oath to preserve the Government was dependent upon the firm and continued support of the loyal people, that he could lead them no faster and no further than they would follow, and that it was absolutely necessary to retain their confidence. His faith in the principles of the Declaration of Independence, his conviction that the people were the rightful source of all governmental power, had suffered no change by his elevation to the Presidency; in an especial sense a man of the people, the restraint which kept him closely in touch with them was not unwillingly borne, but readily accepted as the condition under which he best could act with and for them.

The acquisition of vast power, increasing with the prolongation of the war, made no change in the simplicity of his character. Unhampered by conventionalities, indifferent to forms, he received his old-time friends with the freedom of their earlier intercourse, and was accessible to all who sought him. No visitor was too humble for his consideration, and if, in too many instances, the

causes which received his attention were too trivial to engage the thought of the Chief Magistrate of a great nation in its time of stress, the very fact of his willingness to see and hear all endeared him to the people, who saw in him one of themselves, unspoiled by power, unharmed by success.

As no President before him had done, he confided in the people; and in a series of remarkable letters and speeches, explained or justified his more important acts by arguments of simplest form but marvelous strength. His frankness and directness of expression, his obvious sincerity and absolute patriotism, even, perhaps, as much as the force of his reasoning, compelled respect for his acts, and enlarged the number and increased the faith of his strenuous supporters.

The sympathetic audience which he gave to every tale of woe, his manifest reluctance to inflict the extreme penalty which violation of military law entailed, seemed at times to detract from the dignity of his high office, and prompted commanding officers to complain that the proper maintenance of discipline was rendered impossible by Mr. Lincoln's sensibility; but these characteristics strengthened his hold upon the people at home and in the army. In his profound sympathy, in his splendid courage, in his transparent honesty, in his patriotic devotion, in his simplicity of thought and manner, nay, in the very haggardness of feature, ungainliness of form, and homeliness of attire, he was the expression of a plain people's hopes, and the embodiment of their cause.

Here was neither Cæsar nor Napoleon, but a popular leader such as befitted a Republic destined to preserve its popular form, though its ruler wielded imperial power; a

leader whose highest ambition was to save the country and to transmit the government unimpaired to his successor.

Generals intoxicated with power and anticipations of success, might assert the country's need of a dictator and, apparently, be not unwilling to assume the role, but the President, without shadow of jealousy of any of his subordinates, shrewdly declared, "Only those generals who gain success can set up dictators. What I ask of you is military success; I will risk the dictatorship."

The splendid manifestation of popular feeling which followed the assault upon Sumter might easily have caused the President to rely confidently upon popular support in his every effort to suppress the Rebellion; the generous response to his early calls for troops might readily have assured him that the number of volunteers would exceed all needs, and have led him to expect the speedy end of the war; but he was not deluded by the hope that the war would be of short duration; he saw the necessity of preparation for a long struggle, and felt the importance of conserving all interests, and of securing the support of all who, however they may have differed in other respects, agreed in devotion to the Union. Hence he made concessions to the opinions of those who, while opposed to disunion, did not sympathize with his own views concerning slavery and its extension. "How a free people" would "conduct a long war" was a problem to be demonstrated, and President Lincoln was unwilling to alienate any who were faithful to the Government, even though they deprecated the occasion which had placed it in jeopardy. His sagacity and his observation had shown him how wavering were the currents of popular opinion,

how readily popular enthusiasm could be quenched by disappointment and defeat, and how imperative it was for him to hold together all elements requisite to the successful prosecution of the war.

Disappointed friends might inveigh against his caution and demand dismissal of leaders and change of policy, lukewarm supporters might withdraw their confidence, supersensitive observers might denounce heroic war measures as invasions of personal or State rights, but, despite harassment and annoyance and antagonism, unshaken in purpose, indomitable in courage, the President moved steadily on. The defection of old friends and party associates might grieve him, the unjust accusations of nominal Unionists might rankle, but he could not be deflected from the line of his duty.

He knew that other than purely military considerations might rightfully determine campaigns, that success in the field, though conducive to success at home and to ultimate triumph, was not the only essential, and that to maintain the armies at the front it was imperative to sustain the sentiment of the people at home. From the broader outlook of the Capital, from his knowledge of the people directly and through their chosen representatives he appreciated, as the generals in the field could not, the indispensability of popular support as well as of military success.

The President early gave evidence that he was willing to assume the gravest responsibilities by acts which he believed would conduce to the great end that he had in view. "I feel that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Nation. Right or wrong, I assumed

this ground, and now avow it." Acting upon this theory, while he had abstained from striking at slavery as an evil in itself and in its results, yet when, by deliberate and painful consideration, he became convinced that the preservation of the Union demanded freedom for the slave, he determined upon emancipation so far as he could effect it consistently with his constitutional obligation and his military prerogative. We honor his memory because of the courage and the foresight which led him to this great and beneficent act, but we in no wise detract from his fame as the liberator of the slave when calling attention to the fact that uniformly he justified the act by its military necessity, and never because of its righteousness as the abolition of a great wrong.

It is interesting to note the steps by which the President reached his determination to proclaim emancipation. He moved most cautiously and would not allow any of his subordinates to force his hand, or permit them a latitude he would not permit himself, hence when with impetuous and ill-judged zeal General Frémont, who in 1856 was the first Republican nominee for the Presidency, issued a proclamation of freedom, Mr. Lincoln courteously but positively revoked it, an act which brought upon him the condemnation of many of his warmest friends, to one of whom, Senator Browning, he wrote a confidential letter, dated Washington, September 22, 1861, from which I quote:

"General Frémont's proclamation as to confiscation of property and the liberation of slaves is purely political and not within the range of military law or necessity. If a commanding general finds a necessity to seize the farm of a private owner for a pasture, an encampment, or a

fortification, he has the right to do so, and to so hold it as long as the necessity lasts; and this is within military law, because within military necessity. But to say the farm shall no longer belong to the owner, or his heirs forever, and this as well when the farm is not needed for military purposes as when it is, is purely political, without the savor of military law about it. And the same is true of slaves. If the general needs them, he can seize them and use them; but when the need is past, it is not for him to fix their permanent future condition. That must be settled according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military proclamations. The proclamation in the point in question is simply 'dictatorship.' It assumes that the general may do anything he pleases — confiscate the lands and free the slaves of loyal people, as well as of disloyal ones. And going the whole figure, I have no doubt, would be more popular with some thoughtless people than that which has been done! But I cannot assume this reckless position, nor allow others to assume it on my responsibility. * * * I do not say Congress might not with propriety pass a law on the point, just such as General Frémont proclaimed. I do not say I might not, as a member of Congress, vote for it. What I object to is, that I, as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the Government." *

Again, when later, General Hunter, unmindful of Frémont's experience, and confronted by peculiarly aggravating conditions in his Department of the South, issued a proclamation of emancipation, the President countermanded the general's act, but in the order of revocation

* These passages were read from the original autograph letter.

there was a distinct advance in the views expressed on the subject of emancipation as a military measure. Now, instead of doubting his own right as President, he declared "whether it be competent for me as Commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether at any time, in any case it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the Government to exercise such a supposed power are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field."

The revocation of these attempts at emancipation evoked many indignant protests against the President's action, but they were ineffective to change it; but four months later, having decided that the time had come when the Nation's life demanded the emancipation of the slaves of rebel owners, on the 22nd of September, 1862, he announced his purpose to declare freedom to the slaves held by the people in rebellion, and on the first of January, 1863, by virtue of his power as Commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, as a fit and necessary war measure for the suppression of rebellion, he proclaimed emancipation to slaves within designated territory, invoking "upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, * * * the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

Although the President had decided that emancipation was only justified as a war measure, he declared emphatically that he would not retract or modify the proclamation or return to slavery any person who had been freed by its terms or by any of the acts of Congress, and in his

last annual message he repeated that declaration and said: "If the people should, by whatever mode and means, make it an executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another and not I must be their instrument to perform it."

Emancipation, which in its inception was necessarily limited and largely tentative, became by force of his action and by reason of his advocacy universal and permanent, for it was through his inspiration and because of his persistence that by legal procedure the war measure became a constitutional enactment and to the end of time Abraham Lincoln will be known as the Liberator of the Slave.

The possession of imperial power, the accomplishment of complete victory,— saving the Union and securing its by-product, Emancipation,— the plaudits of exulting thousands, did not change the man, or tempt him to forego his allegiance to the Constitution, or to waver in his devotion to "the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." No aspiration for perpetuity of power separated him from the plain people upon whom he relied, from whose ranks he had come, to whom he expected to return, for it is his glory that he not only completed a great work, and guaranteed its beneficent and far-reaching consequences, "but," to quote the language of Carl Schurz, "that during the stormiest and most perilous crisis in our history, he so conducted the Government and so wielded his almost dictatorial power as to leave essentially intact our free institutions in all things that concern the rights and liberties of the citizen."

From the highest reach that Lincoln had attained before his accession to the Presidency to the zenith of his career, the space seems incalculable. The study of his

earlier life shows indeed that he possessed clearness of thought, remarkable gift of expression, native sagacity, honesty of purpose, and courage of conviction; that he was devoted to the rights of man, and that he loved his country; but that he possessed elements of greatness in such degree as the war revealed could not have been surmised from aught he had said or done. And that he should manifest so soon and so signally his ability to rule a great nation in the most dangerous period of its existence; that he should overtower his associates, and prove that more than they he was fitted to save the Government; that he could wield a power far greater than that of any of his predecessors and surpassing that exercised by any contemporary ruler, king or emperor, could not have been foreseen by any lacking divine inspiration. Not by graded steps, but by giant stride, Lincoln reached the height of power, achievement and fame. True, the progress of the war revealed growth in character, in thought and in force, and he stood much higher at its close than at its beginning; but at its opening it early became apparent that Providence had so shaped the country's destiny that the man who had been chosen mainly because of his availability as a candidate was far and away the one man for the office and the work.

In the metropolis of the State wherein most of Lincoln's life was lived, on the shore of the great lake over which he had so often looked, at the entrance to the beautiful park that bears his name, stands his figure in bronze, in the attitude of speaking as he so often stood in life; his face is rugged and kindly; no toga drapes his gaunt form or hides his everyday garb; no scroll in his hand and no conventional column by his side detract from his homely

simplicity; no allegoric devices mar the harmonious realism; upon the flanks of the granite exedra that stretches around the pedestal, metal globes bear the words of his immortal utterances. This triumph of St. Gaudens's art marvellously portrays the ideal, that is no less the real, ABRAHAM LINCOLN — PRESERVER OF THE UNION — SAVIOR OF THE REPUBLIC.

11.2002.084.09202

